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30 January 1981

East Europe Report

POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

(FOUO 1/81)

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POLAND

SOVIET CP EXPERT EXPLAINS WHY LIBERALIZATION IN POLAND NOT POSSIBLE

Paris VALEURS ACTUELLES in French 15-21 Sep 80 pp 42-43

[Interview with Michael Voslensky, date and place not given, remarks taken down by Michel Gurfinkiel: "Poland: The Logic of Repression--In Gdansk as in Moscow Communism Is the Rule of a Fuedal System: The 'Nomenklatura.' And no Liberalization Is Possible. Michael Voslensky Explains Why for VALEURS ACTUELLES."]

[Text] In Poland repression is inevitable. That is how Michael Voslensky analyzes it for VALEURS ACTUELLES. [Photo not reproduced; Caption follows in parentheses] (Mr Michael Voslensky. His analysis of the "Nomenklatura" parallels the one Mr Solzhenitsyn made of the Gulag.) Mr Voslensky, who was in the CPSU hierarchy and came over to the West in 1972, has recently described, in a 460-page book, "The Nomenklatura" (Pierre Belfond, publisher), the formation and functioning of the class which in the USSR and other countries of Eastern Europe bears the name "Nomenklatura," the cadres of the State and the party. The "Nomenklatura," a new feudal system, governed by an extremely complex hierarchy, cannot tolerate the creation of independent power centers in society, such as the "free unions" called for by the Gdansk strikers. Whether it backs up Mr Kania or Mr Gierek, Mr Brezhnev or his heirs, the communist "hidden class" defends its priveleges with the same tenacity.

[Question] Is the USSR ready to accept a certain amount of liberalization in Poland?

[Answer] Perhaps temporarily. But not in the long run. The new Polish management team's mission is, via hedging or repression, to go back on the concessions granted by Mr Gierek such as the right to strike or the abolition of censorship. If this were not the case, there would not in fact have been changes at the top in the government.

[Question] Mr Gierek was the victim of a heart attack.

[Answer] Poor man! Losing his job because of illness...In fact, the personality factor does not work the same way in communist countries that it does in the West. It is never a man who governs, it is a class, the "Nomenklatura." When the head of

[redacted]

the party or the government is no longer performing his function, which is to do an impeccable job of defending the privileges of those in the "Nomenklatura," he is sent packing.

In 1964 Nikita Khrushchev was driven out in this way. In 1970 it was the Polish Gomulka's turn, he was replaced by Mr Gierek, and today it is the latter who is leaving. All these top men are interchangeable, and it is useless to speculate about the liberalism of some or the orthodoxy of others, about one generation taking over from another in the Kremlin, or about the moods of Mr Brezhnev's successors.

[Question] How is this ruling class defined?

[Answer] A communist regime is an ultrafeudal regime in which you have no personal fortune but you benefit from a greater or lesser range of material things and privileges according to the position you occupy in the political order.

This works at the bottom as well as at the top. In the concentration camps of the Gulag, food rations are indexed in this way to very precise degrees of guilt; and at the top of the communist party, a minute difference of rank is conveyed by the right to have a chauffeured car which waits for you in the street 24 hours a day, or by the slightly less fantastic right to call for a limousine when you want it, also provided with a driver, which is stationed at a State "base."

Everything is ranked hierarchically to an infinite degree and in the slightest detail. Everything has a classification, everything is "nomenklaturized."

[Question] Does the same system operate in the USSR and in its vassal countries?

[Answer] With some differences stemming from national temperaments and local circumstances.

In the GDR, for example, there is not just one single political party but rather five; one of them, the SED, the Socialist Unity Party, is in charge, and the other four serve as lower subcastes within the East German "Nomenklatura." The possible liberalization of a communist regime comes down to such subtleties, to a little more refined tiering of privileges.

The main thing is for power to remain monolithic, for there not to be several independent decision-making centers. In Poland the workers have just won some very limited rights compared to those enjoyed by everyone in the West, but they are very real ones. Therefore power is no longer indivisible: it is challenged by an embryo of opposing power. Therefore repression is inevitable, in the short or medium term.

[Question] Do the Soviet leaders want to extend their system of government to the entire world?

[Answer] Yes. And furthermore, the Kremlin has no choice. For even if the system were perfect on the political plane it leads to perpetual disaster on the economic plane. The "Nomenklatura" is all-powerful, but the material goods which it is able to enjoy are not produced in sufficient quantity inside the empire. Therefore other goods must be skimmed off elsewhere.

The USSR binds certain countries to its empire, like Afghanistan; it guarantees its influence in others, like Angola; and, finally, it imposes on a third category of states what is called Finlandization: cooperation by means of intimidation. The Red Army in this way lines up more than 100 divisions facing Europe, and tanks, and SS-20 missiles, while it only deploys 45 facing China. The Europeans, who are rich and weak at the same time, must constantly agree to negotiate, make deals, and put their diplomatic policy in line with Moscow's.

Among us Russians we always laugh when we hear people in the West speak of their arms industries and denounce their "military-industrial complex." Do you know that that very word is part of official Soviet terminology, and that our own defense industries are run by two bodies: the CPSU Central Committee's department of defense industry, and the military-industrial committee of the USSR Council of Ministers, presided over by General Lev Smirnov?

The communist ruling class puts its trust in the military: that is the only thing it knows how to do.

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POLAND

STRATEGY OF CATHOLIC CHURCH DURING STRIKE CRISIS NOTED

Paris LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR in French 20-26 Sep 80 pp 52-53

[Article by Claude-Francois Jullien: "The Flexible Strategy of the Polish Church"]

[Text] Today we know what the real role of the Catholic hierarchy was during the crisis.

Sunday Mass on Polish radio, starting 21 September! A minor revolution. Primate Stefan Wyszynski had for a long time demanded the right for the Church to have access to the audiovisual media. The cardinal certainly has not yet obtained full satisfaction, for example, television will not repeat the Sunday Mass. But Polish Catholics "are ever patient."

A victory for the Church, won by the Gdansk strikers? Or a gift from the government to the Church for services rendered? The complexity of the situation allows us to ask that question and, besides, the game played by the Church, during the weeks of crisis, was not always evident. On 17 August, when the strikes were spreading, Stefan Wyszynski intervened for the first time. His tone was firm. In passing, he recalled the victory of Poland over the Soviet troops in 1920. He above all presented a dramatic picture of Poland in 1980 and denounced the system which causes absenteeism and promotes waste.

But tension rose very rapidly and the Church felt that it could not go too far. After having met the cardinal-primate, Msgr Kaczmarek, the bishop of Gdansk, was charged with correcting the fire. On 24 August he delivered a homily, an appeal for moderation and a return to work. On 26 August, on the occasion of a big pilgrimage to Czestochowa, Stefan Wyszynski, who had received a letter from John Paul II, used his sermon to spell out the Church's position. And, to lend greater weight to his speech, the bishops, meeting in the sanctuary, published a collective letter on the crisis.

Appeal For a Pause

For the first time, television for 35 minutes presented a rerun of selected excerpts from the homily. It was said that the cardinal was unaware that he was being filmed. Stefan Wyszynski is not easy on the regime but television viewers above all remembered two particularly important passages from his smooth-flowing speech: "Sometimes one must not ask for too much, especially when the demands, if they are just,

and in general they are, can never be met on the spot. The strike is a costly argument, its price is a burden on the entire economy and that strikes a blow at the life of the nation and the human individual." Quite clearly, the cardinal called for a return to work.

The document of the bishops establishes that "current tensions are the consequences of discontent accumulated over several years." The bishops expressed their hope "that the strikes would end through the achievement of agreements featuring suitable guarantees" and they affirmed the right of the workers to create representative unions. But the fact remains that the primate appealed for a return to work. In Rome, for the first time, John-Paul II made a discreet allusion to Poland. "The Cross" is not wrong. The Catholic daily ran this headline: "Church Intervenes in Polish Crisis."

But some things have changed undoubtedly in the Polish world just the same. The strikers are not listening to the primate. They do not return to work. On 28 August, the Episcopate adjusted its fire and announced that Cardinal Wyszynski had been censored on television and recalled the inalienable rights of the nation. On 31 August, the strikers in Gdansk were winning but Soviet pressure was stepped up. And on Wednesday, 3 September, John-Paul II broke his silence. Recalling the 6 million Polish dead--including 3 million Jews--during the last war, he said: "Poland has earned a moral right to independence and sovereignty." And he added: "I have the right and the duty to speak of that problem because I am Polish but also because it is a part of my mission."

This restless and pressing intervention by the Pope explains and clarifies the sometimes astonishing positions of the Polish Church. "The Pope is afraid," one monsignor explained. "There had been a risk of Soviet intervention, even though that seemed improbable; and there was above all the danger of having Moscow impose upon Warsaw a team of hardliners, charged with wiping out the advantages gained as quickly as possible."

The caution of the Polish Church, like that of the labor unionists and the men in power can above all be explained--it is true--by the very real fear of Soviet intervention--but also by the frailty of the economy. A long crisis would involve the risk of causing a real famine and even greater dependence on the Soviet Union. And here is a third reason: the fear of a return to violence. The crosses that mark the places where the strikers of 1970 died were entirely symbolical. Besides, a return to violence would have signified the loss of all gains. Finally, the clergy is very much tied to the working class and the priests knew that the workers, who draw starvation wages, could not hold out long.

The Heir of History

There is thus no shortage of reasons for the Church to preach caution. And its attitude is explained by its political realism (Realpolitik [realistic politics]). Ever since he has been primate of Poland (November 1948), Stefan Wyszynski has become a master in the art of the dialogue with the communists. It was he who perfected the policy of nibbling, the idea of "millimeter by millimeter": whenever the possibility presents itself, grabbing as much as possible, fully aware of the

frailty of the system, in order always to enlarge the area of freedom. He experienced Stalinism, the prisons, and the October spring. And he has watched a succession of officials in charge.

Ste. an Wyszynski and Edward Gierek had been nicknamed "the friendly enemies." And Gierek today is bound to regret that strange connivance. In 1976, the primate had reached retirement age and the Poles expected Rome to appoint his successor in the person of the young cardinal-archbishop of Krakow, Karol Wojtyla. A man who speaks bluntly, he scared the communists. Gierek preferred his usual partner. He thus intervened personally with Paul VI to make sure that the old primate would keep his job. Just 2 years later, he still had his "good primate," but the man he had wanted to protect himself against had become Pope John-Paul II. Today, there is no more Gierek but Wojtyla is in Rome and Wyszynski is in Warsaw.

The great caution of the Church which nevertheless appears all-powerful may be a surprise but it must be realized that the Church of Poland has always had that attitude, based on a simple principle: "One bad Pole is always better than the best of the Russians." The party holds power but the Church is the expression of the nation, the heir of history. They are doomed to live together. And, to keep itself going, the government must make concessions. In January 1979, when preparations were made for the journey of John-Paul II, Edward Gierek received Stefan Wyszynski for 4 hours as part of a surprise visit and the announcement published at the end of the meeting asserted that they wanted to cooperate "toward the unity of the nation and the strengthening of people's Poland in the world."

Room for Freedom

The Church is not in the service of the state, even though it may in specific situations be persuaded to serve it, to save that which is essential. It measured the risks a long time ago. On 28 January 1979, in a group letter, the Polish Episcopate asserted: "Aggressive atheism has done everything to transform us into a laicized, in other words, atheistic nation. We suffered prison but we managed to save that which is most sacred in the nation." Nevertheless, the attitude of the Church in August undoubtedly had a different meaning. The Church of Poland was aware of the crises which threatened it: the growing indifference of the citizens and "the decline in morality" ("Nous, chretiens de Pologne" [We, the Christians of Poland], published by Cana, by a group of authors); but at the same time it knows how to recognize a real maturity among the Christian laymen. It no longer makes decisions for them. It can let those men and women, whom it has often shaped, adopt their position and take action. During the strike, the labor unionists did their job: they were bold but they knew just how far they could go; and the Church was then able to help the moderating elements. It perhaps did not facilitate a victory of the workers but it momentarily safeguarded "the essential thing"--a fragile regime--while permitting an enlargement of "the room of liberty."

The Polish Church knows--and it tries not to experience this dramatically--that there is no other choice for Poland. It belongs to the East Bloc. And, whether it likes it or not, it realizes that Poland's future also is shaped through Moscow.

PHOTO CAPTION

[p 52] The meeting between Lech Walesa and Cardinal Wyszynski. "One bad Pole is always better than the best of the Russians."

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POLAND

FRENCH JOURNALIST VIEWS CONFRONTATION BETWEEN NEW UNIONS, GOVERNMENT

Paris LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR in French 20-26 Oct 80 pp 66-67

[Article by K. S. Karol: "Lech Walesa On His Drive"]

[Text] At Gdansk and in Warsaw, K. S. Karol watched the organization of the confrontation between the men of the "new labor union" and the party apparatus.

The grand avenue linking the cities of Gdansk and Gdynia, passing through the beach resort of Sopot, right after the war, bore the name of Joseph Stalin. Then it was renamed twice: first of all, Avenue of 20 October and then Boulevard of Independence. But my cabdriver, a man of about 30, very talkative and a great admirer of Lech Walesa, did no longer know what event took place on that date of 20 October. He scratched his head, searched his memory, and admitted he was stumped: "This was certainly a Russian holiday but I cannot recall which one."

Not at all; this was indeed a Polish holiday: On 20 October 1956, Khrushchev, surrounded by the Kremlin leadership team, landed at Warsaw to block Gomulka's way to power but his move was in vain and Poland then experienced its "springtime in October." At that time, as today, I went from Warsaw to Gdansk and the memories I have sounded like a fairy tale to my cabdriver, a story as far removed as that of the conquest of Mexico by Hernan Cortes. The only reply he had for me was: "Do you believe today also that the Bears will try to intervene?" In reply I told him what an intellectual in Warsaw had told me the night before: "The Russian tanks are not paper tigers; but we cannot act only by thinking of the foreign threat."

"Trust Me"

In Poland you certainly have to have strong nerves and, on that score, my cabdriver agrees, although in the end he did not conceal his fear before me to the effect that "all of this will end badly." I imagine that the recent speeches by the East German and the Czechoslovak leaders--who openly brandish the threat of a "brotherly" invasion of Poland--were precisely intended only to strengthen the Warsaw government by first of all intimidating that sector of public opinion which is afraid of the consequences of the demand drive by the opposition and the new labor union.

At Gdansk, in front of the headquarters of Solidarity, my cabdriver quite ostensibly put the "on call" sign on his cab and joined the crowd which, in spite of the rain,

would remain for many long hours in order to observe, through the closed windows, the meeting of the labor union officials who had come from all over Poland to review the record of the general strike that was to serve as a warning on 2 October. Toward the evening, he took me to the airport and refused any pay: "I would rather you told me what Lech Walesa said because I saw that he talked a lot."

The fact is that Walesa did not preside over the meeting and did not deliver any big speeches. His authority is such that he often intervenes in the debate without asking the "colleague presiding over the meeting" for the floor; but his remarks are always to the point, concerning specific affairs and not the great problems of the future. He quickly grasps the feelings of the crowd in the auditorium and manages to express them, to condense them into a few trenchant phrases. Now, the climate of the meeting was aggressive, not only because the strike had been a big success and had the support of a vast majority of the population.

The eyewitness reports from the regional officials as a matter of fact were in agreement: the men in power, starting with the enterprise managers, did not display any tendency to repent and barely managed to conceal "their hostility," according to one of the speakers, "against Solidarity as a labor union and against the working class as a whole." There were many specific examples and some of them almost sounded funny: In several big factories, the manager, assisted by the party secretary, even went so far as to accuse the workers of creating the risk of triggering World War III because of their strike! But Lech Walesa was not laughing: "We must record all of these facts and all of these names. They must realize that the time will come to settle accounts and that everybody in Poland will have to answer for his actions."

Next came the problem of information: In several cities, starting with Szczecin, the local press announced that the order to go out on strike had been recalled. In other cities, phony tracts, signed by Walesa, on the same topic, were circulated. Solidarity thus could not be satisfied merely with protesting; the new labor union has an urgent need for having its own national daily and having access to the audio-visual media. Once that principle had been accepted, the only discussion revolved around the circulation to be demanded for the future daily and the television time to be demanded. Quite realistically, Walesa proposed that not too much be demanded--some people wanted one hour per day on television--"in order not to bother the people." He was not in favor of a general strike to support his demands: "We will get everything we demand and everything that is in line with the Gdansk agreements, without going out on strike." The implied meaning was: "Trust me, I know how to handle myself." And he added: "We will go out on a general strike if they try to hit us; but arrangements have already been made for that eventuality."

Leaving Gdansk, I thus concentrated on at least one point: This young self-managed labor union, directed by the men of a new generation--they are rarely more than 30 years old--which experienced neither the war, nor the occupation, will not be satisfied with the simple right to exist (although, in that part of the world, that already is a tremendous gain). It will go forward, it will fight to win other concessions, to make its voice heard everywhere and on all problems. It still lives in what a Polish sociologist calls "its messianic and spontaneist phase." For the moment, it is in no hurry to move on to the "organized and political phase." But by what means and from whom could it wrest these concessions?

If we were still back in 1956, at the time of the earlier "springtime in October," this question would have been irrelevant. At that time, the CP admitted that it had gone the wrong way by reason of its loyalty to Stalin but it retained a certain ideological coherence and declared itself capable of coming up with new political proposals for the country. To guarantee peace for everybody, Gomulka promised to purge and put back in its place the redoutable security apparatus which neither he himself--he had been released from prison--had been able to handle, nor scores of thousands of other Poles, many of whom could be rehabilitated only posthumously.

"Those Profligates"

The second "springtime in October," on the official side, took place under an entirely different sign. During the Gierek decade, this country experienced very little repression and an enormous volume of corruption. The old secretary-general, who today is accused of having acted in a state of "madness" (this is the title of a book by Stefan Zweig, who is very well known in Poland), proclaimed that "the wealth of each citizen contributes to the wealth of society as a whole." And the men of the political and economical apparatus obviously were best placed to get rich, especially when they were unscrupulous.

Today, the leading group rallied around Stanislaw Kania, has not managed to draft a new "line" and, while declaring that it will respect the Gdansk agreements, it does not know what to do with the new labor unions nor how to talk to them. On the other hand, it is solidly united by its rancor against "Gierek and his clique"--"those profligates," as somebody in high places told me, "who were unable to foresee the social consequences of their policy." And Kania issued a watchword: "Purge the party of those who dishonored it through their immoral conduct but defend comrades who were unjustly slandered for abuses they did not commit."

This drive--even though Stanislaw Kania does not seem to realize it--smacks of a scenario which China experienced during the first phase of the Cultural Revolution, in 1966.

In Peking, as today in Warsaw, they proclaimed: "Indeed, 95 percent of the party cadres are good or relatively good and only 5 percent must be punished because they are bad." But the natural tendency among the Chinese rank and file was to believe that the "bad ones" were in front of it while the "good ones" were someplace else, nobody knew where. The Poles today have the same attitude toward their leaders and there is apparently no lack of grounds for their distrust.

They just learned, for example, that two medium-level cadres--a former television manager by the name of Szczepanski, and a former export department director by the name of Tyranski--had embezzled funds going not into the millions of zlotys but rather into the millions of dollars. These men built themselves luxury mansions in the Warsaw suburbs; they bought yachts and cars worthy of Western magnates. According to the official charges, they organized big shindigs, importing call-girls from abroad. Learning of these turpitudes, the ordinary citizen can only ask himself: Who came to the mansions of those profiteers? Who participated in their orgies? Their invited guests could only be their equals or their superiors, the same people who today hold leadership positions in the party and in running the economy.

"Poland today," a friend told me quite casually, "is a country of 30 million private detectives and self-appointed prosecutors who are convinced--in defiance sometimes of good common sense--that their leaders shared among themselves the country's foreign debt which amounts to $20 billion." But while deploring this "chase after the thieves," that same friend of mine is sure that it will not stop so long as the leadership personnel from the Gierek era have not left the scene. Now, those persons are displaying no tendency to retire. On the contrary, the apparatchiks, seeing themselves threatened, are closing ranks and are resisting the albeit rather timid innovative initiatives of their new secretary-general. More than that, they feel that they are at bay and they step up their hostility toward the new labor union which has shaken their power to its foundations.

In this climate, the regular members of the PZPR [Polish United Workers Party] try to withdraw from the scuffle and Stanislaw Kania runs from one big factory to the next--from Huta Warszawa in Warsaw to the Warski construction site at Szczecin--in the hope of holding on to them. According to the very official TRYBUNA LUDU, these each time are meetings full of bitterness in the course of which the party's secretary-general is not only not applauded but must answer "difficult questions."

Far From the Listening Posts

In view of this new reality as embodied by Lech Walesa, the party thus looks severely in disarray and even nonexistent. But it would be dangerous to go by outward appearances. This rank and file of the PZPR, which has dissociated itself from its own leaders, has not played any role in the party for a long time; the only real Communist Party of Poland is its executive apparatus which draws its strength from a gigiantic repression apparatus, the counterintelligence service of the army. Now, these forces are still there and this time they are not suffering from any guilt complex; if anything, they reproach themselves for their tolerance toward the various opposition groups--because, after 1976, those groups were multiplied--rather than for their abuses of power. How could one forget this "second reality of Poland"--the police power--when, at Warsaw, friends who freely talked about politics in general invite you take a walk the moment they have something specific to tell you, something which they prefer "should not be registered by the bugs."

For the period of 6 months since the signing of the Gdansk agreements, there has been a strong polarization, in my opinion, in Poland between two hostile camps: the worker movement and its allies, on the one hand, and the apparatus of the discredited Communist Party, with its repressive force on the other hand. This is a dangerous situation because the neighbors of the Warsaw Pact are only waiting for the outbreak of a domestic clash in Poland in order to intervene. It is because of this context, that the speeches by men such as Honecker or Bilak have such a sinister sound.

But, although the situation may be very worrisome there, Poland is not necessarily on the eve of a civil war. The Polish workers have learned to conduct their struggle with great intelligence and they know that, among themselves at the plant, they can no longer be mismanaged or repressed. No apparatus hereafter can force them to carry out plans previously prepared by they do not know whom, a thief or a "good cadre." Their refusal to respond to Kania's appeals for productivity could thus--without a general strike, which would furnish a pretext for police provocations--

force even the party's hard-line sectors to get together with Walesa and his people and to run the country's institutions accordingly. Poland--as we shall see in one of the next articles--is headed straight for an economic disaster of dimensions without precedent in its recent history. And this prospect, in the final analysis, should sooner or later bend the resistance of the adversaries of a real political and social change.

PHOTO CAPTION

[P 67] Lech Walesa in his office in Gdansk. "The time will come for the settlement of accounts and each and every one will have to answer for his actions."

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POLAND

FRENCH PRESS COMMENTS ON KANIA, OLSZOWSKI NOTED

Paris VALEURS ACTUELLES in French 15-21 Sep 80 p 43

[Article: "The Warsaw 'Liberal'--A 'new liberal,' Stanislaw Kania, Is Succeeding a 'Worn-out Liberal,' Mr Gierek. In Actual Fact, the KGB Is Strengthening Its Hold in Warsaw."]

[Text] Nearly 3 years ago, at the end of 1977, Mr Gierek had tripled the Polish police and secret services budget: from 7.5 million zlotys to nearly 22 million. The man who benefited from this deal was Mr Kania, who was at that time the official within the communist party's Politburo in charge of security matters and religious affairs [Photo not reproduced; Caption follows in parentheses] (Mr Stanislaw Kania, the new Polish Communist Party secretary. A "liberal" career close to the KGB.) Today Stanislaw Kania has become the head of the party. His appointment took place during the night of 5-6 September, only a few hours after the "heart trouble" which claimed Mr Gierek as a victim.

Mr Kania is madeout to be a liberal. In actual fact, he is a police bureaucrat. Born in 1927 in Wrocanka, in the southwest part of the country, he is said to have joined the anti-German Resistance in 1942 at 15 years of age, if his official biography is to be believed. According to another version his family had been able to take refuge in France or in Great Britain in 1939 at the time of the joint aggression by the Reich and the Soviet Union against the Polish Republic.

From 1946 to 1952 the young Kania received communist apparatchik training in Poland and the USSR. Then, starting in 1953, he got into an unobtrusive career in the party "organization" services: those which answer directly to the Soviet political police, the ex-NKVD, which today is called the KGB. His position enabled him to escape the successive "normalizations" which hit the Polish communist party following the popular uprisings of 1956, 1968, 1970 and 1976.

Named head of the party's domestic police force in November 1968, at the time Mr Gomulka's regime was cracking down on the social democratic or Catholic opposition, he found himself in the Politburo in 1971 at Mr Gierek's side, and he carried out an in-depth purge of communist cadres for the new team: 150,000 were dismissed, including 14 our of 19 officials in charge of "voivodies" (provinces). The reputation for liberalism which Stanislaw Kania currently enjoys undoubtedly stems from the way in which this purge was carried out. In actual fact there were few acts of violence and few arrests, and retirements were arranged amicably.

Another liberal whose rise has been facilitated by Mr Gierek's defeat in the face of the Gdansk strikers, Stefan Olszowski, was also trained at the beginning of the 1950's in the NKVD's special schools.

Up to 1960 he was in charge of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), an unofficial communist organization which played an important role in Europe and in the Third World. Then he became a diplomat, and then minister of foreign affairs, and in that capacity he was in constant contact with the left wing of the Socialist International led by the West German Willy Brandt and the Swede Olof Palme. The underpinning of the FRG's Ostpolitik after 1969 was partially provided by him, to the extent that he had been able to convince Bonn that a link existed between East-West "detente" and "democratization" in Eastern Europe.

Ousted by Mr Gierek in January 1980 and relegated to an ambassadorial post in the GDR, Mr Olszowski was brought back into the Politburo during the August crisis. This gesture was clearly aimed at the FRG. This confirms that for the Soviets the Polish affair represents only one element of a strategy which takes in the whole of the European continent.

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